

**Sethusamudram Project**

**3148. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:** Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Sethusamudram project is underway;
- (b) if so, the latest status of the project;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that Government are planning to shape a shipping canal by breaking Shri Ram Sethu under this scheme;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether Government have received any suggestion, memoranda and recommendations, etc. in order to have a change in the project and also not break Shri Ram Sethu; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken by Government in this regard?

**THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU):** (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The commencement of the work for the project was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on 2-7-2005 and the work is in progress. The project involves dredging work mainly at two places namely Adam's Bridge and Palk Strait. As estimated, a total quantity of 82.5 million cubic metres is required to be dredged. The Dredging Corporation of India Ltd., Visakhapatnam has been entrusted with the dredging work of the project. The work at Adam's Bridge has commenced on 11-12-2006.

(c) and (d) There is no scientific evidence regarding the existence of any ancient man-made structure in the proposed Sethusamudram Ship Channel alignment.

(e) and (f) Some representations against undertaking the project have been received. However, as per the scientific information available with the Project Authorities, there is no underwater construction in the project area.